

Remarks/Arguments

As indicated in the last Response, original claims 1-18 were cancelled and new claims 19-32 were added in order to more definitely claim the invention.

The Examiner has indicated in the last communication that our last response was non responsive because (i) the new claims submitted are different in scope than the originals; and (ii) that the new claims have introduced new matter.

With respect to the first contention, the Examiner notes that the limitations in the new claims are different and that some of the limitations in the original claims have been omitted from the newly-presented claims.

Counsel is aware of no legal authority for the Examiner's position that Applicants are somehow bound to the scope or verbiage of earlier claims. In fact, changes which make the scope of claims more definite in order to facilitate the examination process are encouraged, rather than precluded. The Examiner cites 37 CFR 1.111 suggesting nonresponsiveness. It should be noted that 37 CFR 1.111 actually contemplates the presentation of new claims. Additionally, the rule does not preclude altering the limitations of the original claims. Thus, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner consider the amendment presented earlier.

With respect to the second contention in the communication concerning new-matter, Applicants also request relief. The communication indicates that the "Applicants fail to point out any support, nor does the Examiner find any express or inherent support in the specification" for certain limitations. More specifically, the Examiner identifies limitations of "a first plurality of fibrils," "first node," "second node," and "third node" as being unsupported.

The support for these limitations was discussed in the body of the last Response. In that response, it was made clear that the Examiner had failed to show any reference disclosing

a PTFE article comprising an arrangement where long fibrils interconnect two nodes, and short fibrils interconnect a third node between the two nodes. Looking to FIG. 2 of the application, it can be seen that one embodiment of the present invention includes a first plurality of fibrils interconnecting a first node with a second node. Exemplary embodiments of the first and second nodes may be seen at Ref. No. 5 in the figure. To help illustrate this, an attached drawing has been provided. Referring to the attached drawing, an example of the first node appears as circled node (5) at left-center in the drawing. An example of the second node (5), also circled, would be right-center in the drawing. Embodiments for the rest of the claimed limitations may be seen as existing between these circled nodes. More specifically, the first plurality of fibrils may be seen as the fibrils (4) between the first and second nodes (5) whose reference numbers have been circled. This first plurality of fibrils (4) are shown (but not referenced by number) in the figure as defining larger pores between them.

With respect to the other limitations, a third node (8) which is shown between the first and second nodes (5) may be seen to be substantially smaller than the first and second nodes (5). A second plurality of fibrils (6) attach the third node (8) between the first and second nodes (5) and are substantially shorter than the larger fibrils (4). This second plurality (6) may be seen in the figure as defining a plurality of small pores (shown but not numbered).

Aside from FIG. 2, support for this arrangement is disclosed in the original specification in detail.

If questions with respect to the support for limitations still exist even after reading this Response and the specification, it is requested that the Examiner simply phone counsel at the number provided below rather than transmit further procedural impediments. Applicants share the USPTO's objective that this application be handled without undue delay.

Applicant does not believe that any fee is due with this amendment. However, if Applicant is mistaken, the Commissioner is authorized to deduct any required fee from Deposit Account 19-2112. If the Examiner has any questions concerning this case, he is encouraged to contact the undersigned at the number below.

Respectfully submitted,



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THE COMMISSIONER IS HEREBY AUTHORIZED TO
CHARGE ANY ADDITIONAL AMOUNT REQUIRED,
OR CREDIT ANY OVERPAYMENT, TO ACCOUNT
NO. 19-2112.